**From the Secretary**

Perhaps by a minor miracle, I have survived my first seven months as secretary of ASCS, ably assisted by my colleagues on the Executive and by the former secretary Bruce Marshall who is a fountain of good advice on all secretarial and constitutional issues. I hope that eventually the trainer wheels can come off, but for now I am extremely grateful for all the assistance.

Doing the job, however, especially while acting concurrently as Chair of Department and full-time academic has given me much to think about. What has continually struck me is the extent to which there is an expectation that the Secretary runs the Society. What that has meant is that the newest member of the Executive has been placed in the role of setting the agenda. Perhaps because of my inexperience, but also because this is not a sustainable situation, this state of affairs is already changing. Tim Scott has done a wonderful job of updating the membership lists and of encouraging those who haven’t paid to do so. Nathan Leber has been excellent at posting messages to members in a timely and efficient manner. John Penwill has made the running on the negotiations with Cambridge Journals Online as to the possible future of Antichthon. My role in all these ventures and initiatives has been one of co-ordination and backup rather than active agent. In other words, it is important that the secretary is kept informed, but much more will happen if s/he is not responsible for everything that happens.

Other members have willingly taken on different tasks. Alison Griffith will assist Gina Salapata with the myriad of things a conference convener has to do. Alison will assist Bruce Marshall to organise the Early Career Researcher award with a view to taking on this task next year and she has also accepted a request from me for help with the secretary’s role while I am on leave. Patrick O’Sullivan, K.O. Chong Gossard and Lara O’Sullivan will (respectively) chair the translation, Optima and Australian essay prize panels and John Davidson will chair the CPR committee for ASCS 35. I am assisting Bruce Marshall to co-ordinate the Conference Program Review committee this year with a view to assuming full responsibility in the future. So the message is to get involved. Become active in your Society! Let your reps know if you have initiatives or ideas you would like to put on the table. The long term health of ASCS depends on you all.

**Amphorae VII (University of Sydney)**

I was delighted that my first official activity as secretary was to attend Amphorae VII at the University of Sydney from 17 to 19 July 2013. The conference was convened by Samantha Brancatisano and Bryn Ford, ably assisted by Liam Ahern and a wonderful team of volunteers. As part of the conference proceedings, Professor Harriet Flower delivered the 20th Todd memorial Lecture on the topic, *Consensus and Community in Republican Rome*. She also gave a masterclass on the *Genius Augusti* and her husband Michael Flower ran a seminar on jobs and higher degree study in the USA. They also attended almost every session of the conference and heard quite a few of the papers. We could not have asked for better visitors. The conference also hosted a meeting of AWAWS (Australasian Women in Ancient World Studies) and several parties.

As Samantha’s report states, the conference was attended by 71 participants representing 14 different universities from Australia, New Zealand and abroad. 54 papers and one poster presentation were presented. ASCS contributed $2300 to the cost of the conference, most of which was distributed in travel subsidies to participants who had to cover considerable distances to attend. Catering was made possible by the Australasian Classical Reception Studies Network and the Ancient North Africa and Phoenician Diaspora Research Network which each sponsored panels related to their fields of interest. It would be excellent if this model could be carried over to ASCS, especially if it could lower the cost of registration.

Perhaps for me (and this simply attests how good it was!) the highlight was the Delegates’ Meeting on the last afternoon of the conference. The level of enthusiasm and the ability to articulate issues and problems was tremendous. One definite outcome of this meeting was a proposal that a PG delegates’ forum should be a regular feature of ASCS meetings in future. This in no way replaces the responsibility for attendance at the AGM but recognises that there is always a suite of issues which relate specifically to postgraduates and which are best discussed and even solved by them. The president and secretary should attend these forums, but they should be chaired by the PG reps. The PG forum could also become the *comitia* for selecting the next candidates for PG rep, although the Amphorae delegates’ forum is another possibility. The AGM would then ratify the election as the constitution requires.

**PG (rep) NZ**

At the last AGM, Bruce Marshall raised the issue of whether it would be suitable for PGs at NZ campuses to have their own representative. The initiative was approved by the Executive by consultation earlier in the year. The question of how to select a rep remained. PGs are dispersed over several campuses and some campuses will always have many more PGs than others, giving them at least a perceived advantage over smaller centres. That being the case, I proposed the tried and tested Roman method of group voting as a way forward. The process was reasonably successful. We had two candidates and Lawrence Xu was returned as the first NZ rep. I would really like to thank Julia Simons (Victoria) who also stood as a candidate .

In order for the NZ rep to become a full member of the Executive we must have the AGM adjust the constitution, which currently recognises only one PG rep for all. I will write separately about this in good time before the AGM.

The system we adopted is as follows:

1. There will be two elections, one for PG Rep (Aust) and PG Rep (NZ)
2. Elections are declared open on a given date and each campus is invited to propose a maximum of one nomination.
3. Each campus has one vote. Votes must be in writing.
4. A campus representative numbers the candidates in order of preference and submits the voting form to the returning officer.
5. The returning officer counts the votes and presents the name of the winner to the PG forum. In the event of a tie, the returning officer should consult the second and third preferences.
6. The PG forum must endorse the successful candidate.
7. The elected reps should be endorsed by the AGM of ASCS.

The system might need refinement in future and any suggestions to improve it are welcome but it has the great benefit of providing a mechanism for involving all campuses and potentially all PG members in the process of electing their representative.

**Conference Program Review panel**

The CPR panel, chaired by John Davidson, is as follows. Many thanks to all members who put their names forward for selection.

Roman history: Eleanor Cowan
Greek history: Doug Kelly
Roman literature: John Penwill
Greek literature: Simon Perris
Art and Architecture:  Anne Mackay
Mythology and Religion: Arlene Allen
Late antiquity/early church: Paul McKechnie
Reception: Simon Perris
Philosophy: Han Baltussen
Language/linguistics: Astika Kappagoda
Postgraduate rep: Nathan Leber

In the meantime, I hope to see you at Massey in January, if not before.

Kathryn Welch

Honorary Secretary